

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended). A nonwoven barrier fabric, comprising

- a) a fine-denier spunbond layer comprising a plurality of continuous thermoplastic filaments having a denier of between 0.7 and 1.2 denier;
- b) a barrier layer material ~~deposited~~ provided uniformly ~~onto~~ on the fine denier spunbond layer to provide a barrier layer, wherein the barrier layer is selected from the group consisting of cellulosic pulp, microporous film and monolithic film, and the barrier and fine-denier spunbond layers being consolidated to form a composite fabric; and
- c) said composite fabric having a hydrostatic head to barrier layer basis weight ratio of about at least 4.9 cm/gsm.

Claim 2 (original). A nonwoven barrier fabric as in claim 1, wherein:

said thermoplastic filaments are chosen from the group consisting of polyolefins, polyesters and the blends thereof.

Claim 3 (original). A nonwoven barrier fabric as in claim 2, wherein:

said polyolefins are chosen from the group consisting of polypropylene, polyethylene, and blends thereof.

Claim 4 (currently amended). A nonwoven barrier fabric as in claim 1, wherein: the continuous filaments ~~may~~ comprise filaments selected from the group consisting of bicomponent, multicomponent profiles and ~~the~~ blends thereof.

Claim 5 (cancelled).

Claim 6 (cancelled).

Claim 7 (cancelled).

Claim 8 (original). A nonwoven barrier fabric as in claim 1, wherein:

said means of consolidation are chosen from the group consisting of pressure bonding, thermal calendering, and through-air bonding.

Claim 9 (currently amended). A nonwoven barrier fabric, comprising:

- a) a first fine-denier spunbond layer comprising a plurality of continuous thermoplastic filaments having a denier of between 0.7 and 1.2 denier;
- b) a barrier layer material ~~deposited onto~~ provided on the first fine denier spunbond layer to provide a barrier layer, wherein the barrier layer is selected from the group consisting of cellulosic pulp, microporous film and monolithic film;
- c) a second spunbond layer deposited onto the barrier layer;
- d) the first fine denier spunbond layer, the barrier layer, and the second spunbond layer being consolidated into a composite fabric structure; and
- e) said composite fabric having a hydrostatic head to barrier layer basis weight ratio of about at least 4.9 cm/gsm.

Claim 10 (original). A nonwoven barrier fabric as in claim 9, wherein the second spunbond layer is a fine-denier spunbond layer comprising a plurality of continuous thermoplastic filaments having a denier of between 0.7 and 1.2 denier.

Claim 11 (original). A nonwoven barrier fabric as in claim 9, wherein:

said thermoplastic filaments are chosen from the group consisting of polyolefins, polyesters and blends thereof.

Claim 12 (original). A nonwoven barrier fabric as in claim 9, wherein: said thermoplastic filaments of the first fine denier spunbond layer and the second spunbond layer comprise different thermoplastic polymers.

Claim 13 (cancelled)..

Claim 14 (currently amended). A nonwoven barrier fabric, comprising:

- a) a first fine-denier spunbond layer comprising a plurality of continuous thermoplastic filaments having a denier of between 0.7 and 1.2 denier;
- b) a first barrier layer material ~~deposited onto~~ provided on the first fine denier spunbond layer to provide a first barrier layer, wherein the first barrier layer is selected from the group consisting of cellulosic pulp, microporous film and monolithic film;
- c) a second barrier layer ~~material deposited onto~~ provided on the first barrier layer to provide a second barrier layer, wherein the second barrier layer is selected from the group consisting of cellulosic pulp, microporous film and monolithic film, and said first and second barrier layers forming an overall barrier layer;
- d) a second fine-denier spunbond layer deposited onto the second barrier layer, wherein said second fine-denier spunbond layer comprises a plurality of continuous thermoplastic filaments having a denier of between 0.7 and 1.2 denier;
- e) said first spunbond layer, overall barrier layer, and second spunbond layer layers being consolidated into a composite fabric structure; and

f) said composite fabric having a hydrostatic head to overall barrier layer basis weight ratio of about at least 4.9 cm/gsm.

Claim 15 (cancelled).

Claim 16 (original). A nonwoven fabric, as in claim 14, wherein:

said consolidation method includes thermal calendering said laminate fabric structure to exhibit a hydrostatic head rating of at least about 50 cm.

Claim 17 (withdrawn). A disposable waste-containment garment, comprising;

an absorbent core,

a liquid pervious topsheet,

a liquid impervious backsheet,

said liquid impervious backsheet comprising a fine-denier composite fabric,

said fine-denier composite fabric having a hydrostatic head to barrier layer basis weight ratio greater than 4.9 cm/gsm.

Claim 18 (withdrawn). A disposable waste-containment garment as in claim 17, wherein the garment is a diaper.

Claim 19 (withdrawn). A disposable waste-containment garment as in claim 17, wherein the garment is a catamenial device.

Claim 20 (withdrawn). A disposable garment comprising,

a gown having a front panel, a pair of back panels extending from opposed sides of the front panel, and a pair of sleeve panels, wherein one or more of the respective panels are comprised of a fine denier composite fabric having a hydrostatic head to barrier basis weight ratio of about at least 4.9 cm/gsm.

Claim 21 (withdrawn). A disposable garment as in claim 20 wherein said gown is a medical gown.

Claim 22 (withdrawn). A disposable garment as in claim 20 wherein said gown is an industrial protective garment.

Claim 23 (currently amended). A battery separator, comprising

- a) a first fine-denier spunbond layer comprising a plurality of continuous polyolefin filaments having a denier of between 0.7 and 1.2 denier;
- b) a barrier layer material ~~deposited onto~~ provided on the first fine denier spunbond layer to provide a barrier layer, wherein the barrier layer is selected from the group consisting of cellulosic pulp, microporous film and monolithic film;
- c) a second fine-denier spunbond layer deposited on the barrier layer, wherein said second fine-denier spunbond layer comprises a plurality of continuous polyolefin filaments having a denier of between 0.7 and 1.2 denier;

[c] d) the first fine-denier spunbond layer, the barrier layer, and the second fine-denier spunbond layer being consolidated into a battery separator; ~~and~~ having a hydrostatic head to barrier layer basis weight ratio of about at least 4.9 cm/gsm.

e) ~~said battery separator having a hydrostatic head to barrier layer basis weight ratio of about at least 4.9 cm/gsm.~~

Claim 24 (original). A battery separator as in claim 24, wherein the barrier layer comprises one or more layers of melt-blown polyolefin microfibers.